**41st session of the Universal Periodic Review**

**Review of South Africa**

16 November 2022

**Statement by Austria**

Austria welcomes the delegation of South Africa to the UPR and thanks for the insightful presentation of the national report.

We commend the Government of South Africa for having taken a number of positive steps since its last review. These include the launch of the “National Action Plan to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance” and the “National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide”. Moreover, South Africa made successful efforts to reduce child mortality and has shown great commitment to working with neighboring countries to improve the Human Rights situation in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Finally, we welcome South Africa’s ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture, as well as the establishment of a national preventive mechanism under the South African Human Rights Commission.

Austria remains, however, concerned about various human rights issues, including ongoing violence against women and girls as well as persons from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and asexual persons (LGBTIQA+) community, the increasing number of xenophobic motivated attacks against foreigners, migrants, or asylum seekers, and the lack of effective laws to prevent hate crimes and hate speech.

Austria would therefore like to offer the following recommendations:

* Continue efforts to combat all forms of discrimination against women and girls as well as LGBTIQA+, redouble efforts to eliminate gender-based violence, violence against women and girls as well as LGBTIQA+, and consolidate its initiatives to promote women’s and girls’ empowerment and gender equality.
* Expedite the effective implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, strengthen its efforts to prevent all forms of xenophobic violence against foreigners, migrants or asylum seekers, promote migrant’s rights, and establish a dialogue with civil society organizations to address the root causes of xenophobic tendencies in South Africa.
* Enact the Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill, and ensure effective and independent mechanisms to monitor its implementation and evaluation.

Thank you.